

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments
Appropriations Hearing
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30th, 2023
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Thursday, February 24th, 2022
Maureen Cuda

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Maureen Cuda and I am a registered voter in Shelton.

I am the Program Director at Bridge House Inc., a social rehabilitation program in Bridgeport funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Today I am testifying regarding HB 5037 and in support of increasing funding for services for adults in the DMHAS budget.

The past two years have been extremely challenging for our members (clients). While you and I have struggled to navigate our lives during this pandemic, the men and women Bridge House serves have done so with a chronic and severe mental illness. The illness did not take a break, if anything; due to the isolation, the daily fear and loneliness had become even more of a daily struggle for our members. At the beginning of the pandemic, our connection by phone, text, email and through a virtual community page on Facebook remained constant. We delivered food as needed and sent a weekly mailing. We worked closely with each member to assist in making their life a bit more manageable.

Our services did not stop. Our lines of communication remained open. Members told us we “saved their life.” They felt “blessed” to have Bridge House in their life at this devastating time. Our services for over 35 years have remained constant and steady.

Today I am asking that Bridge House be recognized for its direct, hands on, and much needed services we provide to our membership. I ask that as you decide how to spend the state's funding for mental health services that you consider more funding be appropriated to Bridge House and programs across the state like it.

I thank you for your time and all your efforts in providing the best mental health services available to the men and women of Bridge House.